



# Fresh School Meals

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## APPLES: THE SOUL OF AUTUMN

The cool night breezes of Autumn bring the many varieties of apples to fruition. These fresh picked apples explode on the first crisp bite, bursting with juice of bright intense flavor, perfect for eating from your hand or cooking into hundreds of wonderful meals.

Apples are believed to have originated in the Caucasus Mountains of Southeastern Europe. In Michigan, they come from everywhere but this story is true throughout the United States. There are over 7000 varieties of apples in our country, although most of the production is just a couple of commercial favorites.

The other 6,995 varieties are as widely different in their individual personalities as there are different fish in the ocean. Take a side trip to your local orchard or farmer's market and look for the unusual, the edible treasure you find will reward your adventurous taste buds. Try different orchards to seek out a more expand-



ed variety. Check with farmers for their favorites, as they probably have a stash of antique apples that they would love to share both their flavor and story with you.

Buy a couple of different varieties, some for eating fresh and some for cooking. Select what you can eat or cook within a week's time. Store the fresh apples in a cool place in your kitchen for immediate enjoyment or under refrigeration to keep extra crisp for later in the week.

Raw apples jump with flavor from their crisp texture and bright acidic flavor. Caramelizing apples during cooking combines the natural sugars and acids to make an unique flavor profile. These rich flavors wow your palate with natural good for you flavor.

Apples are a great source of Vitamins, balanced calories and fiber. An apple a day is a great source of non refined balanced carbohydrates.



## PAN ROASTED CHICKEN WITH CARAMELIZED APPLES

Makes 4 servings

Prep time 15 minutes - Cook time about 30 minutes



### Ingredients:

- 4 chicken breasts with the skin, boneless
- Sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 crisp baking apples, cut into 1 inch thick wedges, approximately 8 even pieces per apple
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon turbinado sugar
- 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- 1/2 cup pecan or walnut pieces OPTIONAL
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh chives

### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Season the chicken generously with the salt and the black pepper. In a large heavy skillet heat 1 tablespoons of the butter, over medium high heat. Add the chicken skin down until browned, about 3 minutes. Turn over and cook for an additional minute. Remove to a plate to rest.

Return the skillet to medium heat. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter and the apples, cooking until they begin to brown about 3 minutes. Turn over to brown the other side of the wedges, about 3 minutes. Add the cider vinegar, sugar, cinnamon, cider and cream, heating until the cream begins to boil. Add the chicken breasts to the skillet, skin side up. Transfer the skillet to the lower rack of the oven. Cook until tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. When the chicken is done, remove the chicken to a plate and keep warm. Return the skillet to the burner over medium high heat, cooking to reduce the cream as necessary to sauce consistency. Add the pecans and half of the chives. Adjust the seasonings to taste.

To Serve: Position the chicken breasts in the center of the warm serving plates. Spoon the pan juices over and around the chicken. Top with the remaining chives and serve.

Jimmy Schmidt

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## Additional Recipes

From USDA's Recipe Finder Database:

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Recipes/recipefinder.php>

- [Chicken Salad with Michigan Asparagus, Apples and Walnuts](#)
- [Waldorf Fruit Salad](#)
- [Crunchy Cranberry Granola Parfait](#)
- [Smorgasburgers](#)
- [Walnut-Apple Crunch](#)
- [Cranberry Apple Oat Bar](#)
- [Warm Spinach Salad](#)
- [Chef Cyndie's Spring Salad with Pear Vinaigrette](#)
- [Honey Roasted Sweetpotatoes](#)
- [Fruity California Walnut Salad](#)



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